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Evan Bayh



Christina Hale



John Zody



Rick Ward



Greg Goodnight





Erik May



Natalie Guest



Angela Demaree



Lorenzo Arredondo





Ken Lortz

# **'Let them know Labor Day means something'**

## **Sunday rally features local, state, national Democratic candidates**

By Rob Burgess

Kokomo Tribune

In what was equal parts Democratic political rally and remembrance of the historic gains of organized labor, around 200 people gathered Sunday afternoon outside the United Auto Workers Local 685 Union Hall at 929 East Hoffer St. Among the prominent statewide figures in attendance were former governor and senate candidate Evan Bayh, lieutenant governor candidate Christina Hale and Indiana Democratic Party Chair John Zody.

Labor Day became an official federal holiday in 1894 after the deadly Pullman Strike of 1894. It is now celebrated on the first Monday of September. Standing on stage under a large tent, Rick Ward, the event's master of ceremonies and Community Action Program chair for Howard and Tipton counties, connected the labor struggles of the past and present.

“This election — and we always say it, but I believe it — is as important as any we've faced in modern politics,” he said. “From the White House to the halls of Congress to the assemblies of our statehouses to the chairs of every justice that takes a seat at the bench, be it federal state or local. ... We as working class Americans have to vote for candidates that understand the needs of a healthy 99 percent. Then and only then will we have a fair and just America.”

Mayor Greg Goodnight then began introducing the local candidates on stage including Kevin Summers, who is running for Howard County commissioner; Kelley Land, who is running for county council at-large; and Ed Foster, who is running for county treasurer.

“I'm not on the ballot this year, thank God,” said Goodnight, to laughter.

Goodnight highlighted the efforts of local union members who helped respond to destruction caused by last month's tornadoes. He said he was able to talk to so many other municipalities across the state into sending help in part because of the friendships forged by Joe Ewing, director of street and refuse and candidate for Howard County commissioner.

“We don't have any favors left across the state of Indiana,” he said, to more laughter. “We are out. If we have any more inclement weather I'm pretty sure, Joe, if we call, they will not return our phone calls.”

Erik May, who is running for county judge, said the connection between organized labor and a higher standard of living was strong.

“For the people who don't have the benefit of the union, who are employees at-will, I say, 'Hey, they want to complain about how good the union has it. It doesn't have to be that way, though. We need to build those people up so they can have the same quality of wages and the same expectation of employment that all Americans deserve, especially working class Americans,'" he said.

Zody, who took the stage next, said he wanted to remind the voters knew which party was for organized labor, and which one wasn't.

“If it were up to some of the people on the ballot this year, this union hall wouldn't exist,” he said.

Zody said he was feeling hopeful about the party's chances in November.

“We are 65 days out from an election and I feel pretty good,” he said. “No matter where I go in the state people appreciate what's going to happen Nov. 8. ... That energy is there not because of what the other guys have done wrong, but because of what we're for.”

Natalie Guest, who previously taught at Northwestern High School and currently owns Organic Tan, will challenge incumbent Republican Mike Karickhoff for the District 30 seat in the Indiana House of Representatives

during this year's general election. She said had seen first-hand the power of unions in her own life.

“We've seen union busting in our schools,” she said. “Growing up I saw the pipeline between strong and thriving unions and healthy families. ... People are not free if they don't have access to quality public education. People are not free if they don't have access to health care. People are not free if they're paid substandard living wages. ... Nobody's going to save us. We have to save us.”

Indianapolis-based veteran and veterinarian Angela Demaree officially filed her declaration of candidacy for 5th Congressional District in January. She said pointed to the historical gains of paid vacation, a 40-hour work week, child labor laws, workplace safety standards and regulations, holiday pay, workers' compensation, employer health insurance, minimum wage, overtime pay and lunch breaks.

“I grew up in a union household. I am the daughter of two public school teachers and the granddaughter of a history teacher who dedicated their lives to public education,” she said. “I don't have to tell you that union members are the backbone of America.”

Lorenzo Arredondo, who spent 34 years as a trial judge in Lake County before retiring in 2010, would be the first Latino to be state attorney



general. He said it was important to define the role attorney general as he made his case for the office.

“The attorney general is not the governor's lawyer,” he said. “They are the lawyer for the people.”

Arredondo said besides having a strong union family, he also had personal experience with their importance.

“My relationship to the unions is I was a steelworker,” he said. “That's how I got through college.”

It was then revealed that Labor Day was his birthday. A chorus of “Happy Birthday” broke out as he was presented with a birthday cake. Arredondo said he was born 14 years to the day after his older brother.

“We're Labor Day babies,” he said.

Hale then took the stage to deliver a positive assessment of her and her running mate, John Gregg's, chances against Republican gubernatorial candidate Eric Holcomb.

“It is a good time to be a Democrat running for office,” she said. “We weren't always clear who our opponents would be. ... John Gregg and I intend to hold these offices. We're not auditioning for other jobs like our opponents. ... We're not changing up anything, because we have always

been about the issues. We've always been about the policy. We've always been about doing our homework."

Hale then praised Goodnight for showing a positive example of Democratic executive authority.

"What leadership in times of trouble," she said. "We are ready to roll up our sleeves and go to work for you."

Bayh was then introduced to a standing ovation. Bayh was a late-comer to the race, entering the fold in July after previous Democratic candidate for senate, Baron Hill, dropped out of the running to replace retiring Republican Sen. Dan Coats. Bayh will face Republican candidate Rep. Todd Young in November.

He began with a joke about Demaree being a veterinarian, which, he said, was fitting.

"I look out at Congress and I see a zoo," he said, to laughter.

Bayh also praised Goodnight's leadership during times of crisis.

"Ordinarily I would not be in favor of human cloning, but when it comes to Mayor Goodnight I make an exception," he said, to more laughter. "He's the kind of leader we need to get behind. He's going to do a great job of lifting us up. After November, if I'm privileged to be your senator, I'll make sure that FEMA and everybody else in Washington does everything they can."

Bayh then spoke about making college more affordable and defended the Affordable Care Act and the auto industry bailout. He also railed against the Trans-Pacific Partnership and Carrier's move to Mexico.

"I've come to be with you here today, and I hope you'll vote for me, but that's not what this is all about," he said. "I've really come to be with you here today in Kokomo to say this is not about us or the political parties. I'm here today to ask you to vote for yourselves."

Director of UAW Region 2-B Ken Lortz then once again reminded those assembled of the importance of Labor Day to the movement.

"This is our day," he said. "It's labor that built the middle class."

Lortz then compared this to the anti-union sentiments of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, his running mate Gov. Mike Pence, Holcomb and Young.

"They voted against the auto rescue," he said. "Trump who wasn't in office, didn't get a chance to cast a vote, he's one of those corporate raiders that's out there saying that the auto industry should have been allowed to go into bankruptcy."

Lortz said it was important for those concerned with labor rights to vote straight ticket for Democrats.

“When you're voting, vote all the way down the ballot,” he said. “Don't sit this one out, folks. You know, it's no fun to go to a football game if the other team don't show up. That's called a forfeit. We don't want to forfeit this election.”

Ward then encouraged everyone to get 10 people they knew to vote the “right way.”

“We can't keep sitting on our hands,” he said.

Ward ended by imploring those in attendance to make the power of organized labor felt at the polling booth.

“Let them know Labor Day means something,” he intoned three times before walking off stage to cheers and the sounds of AC/DC's “You Shook Me All Night Long.”

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